

AGENDA ITEM XI-A

Annual Report Division of Academic Affairs FY 1999-2000

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I. Overview

During 1999-2000, the Division of Academic Affairs fulfilled its constitutional obligation to approve and oversee new academic programs and administrative units at public colleges and universities, and it continued to seize opportunities for improving the quality of higher education in Louisiana as a system: it strengthened and refined official policies, took advantage of new technologies to enhance and promulgate review procedures, supported teacher education initiatives, and continued to leverage state-of-the-art information and learning technologies for the benefit of Louisiana's faculty and students.

II. Changes in Policies and Procedures

Policy 2.13 - Professional Program Accreditation

Made effective in October, 1999, this policy (see *Appendix A*) mandates the attainment of appropriate accreditation for those programs wherein program accreditation was deemed necessary to meet requirements of state and/or federal law, required of graduates for professional practice in Louisiana, considered to be essential for further educational study, and determined to be necessary to guarantee the health, safety, and welfare of the state's citizenry. Adoption of this policy represents a step forward in the overall effort of the Regents to guarantee high quality academic instruction at public institutions of higher education in Louisiana.

This policy came out of a thoroughgoing review of the Regents' Degree Inventory to verify the existence of each program and its accreditation status, if applicable. The staff then compiled a list of professional accrediting agencies nationwide and conducted a survey to assess the relevance and desirability of available professional accreditations. The staff worked closely with a sub-committee of the Council of Chief Academic Officers, which developed criteria for program accreditation statewide.

Policy 2.13 was created in dialogue with the statewide Council of Chief Academic Officers: the policy provides for Council input regarding recommended program accreditations, and the Board endorsed the Council's recommendation that serious consideration be given to the desirability of awarding performance funding to institutions which attain both mandatory and recommended program accreditation.

Unresolved issues regarding requirements for the accreditation of engineering and engineering technology programs were resolved into recommendations and approved by the Board in June, 2000.

Matters Pertaining to the Louisiana Community & Technical College System

The staff worked with the new LCTC system and the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to gain approval for the change in governance of three community colleges (Delgado, Nunez, and Bossier Parish). During September, 1999, representatives from the LCTC system, Board of Regents, and the three colleges met with a Substantive Change Committee

from the Commission on Colleges. The Commission approved Louisiana's request to transfer the governance of the three community colleges to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System on December 7, 1999.

The staff also drafted a resolution, approved by the Board in August, 1999, declaring a moratorium on the consideration of new Associate Degree Programs at four-year universities. This resolution showed that the Board was moving in good faith toward complying with the legislature's mandate to reconsider, during the next Master Plan revision process, the propriety of universities' offering associate degree programs in light of the redrawn community and technical college system.

Guidelines for Considering Centers, Institutes, and Other Academic/Research Units

Approved in March, 2000, these new guidelines (see *Appendix B*) provide for appropriate review and consideration of new research centers, institutes, and similar units at the same time they give systems and campuses the flexibility needed for new units to seize emerging research opportunities. This represents a valuable refinement in policy. An institution proposing a new unit to be funded through state appropriations will be required to submit a full proposal for Regents' review, as before – but an institution proposing a new unit to be funded through other than state means will initially register the proposed unit and granted a limited period of conditional approval (usually one year), during which time projected funding must be secured. If appropriate funding is obtained, the unit will then be required to seek full Regents' approval. For each unit so approved, the Regents will require a reassessment of continuing quality and need, generally three to five years after unit operations have begun.

These new guidelines were carefully reviewed by the Council of Chief Academic Officers and by a special committee appointed by the Chair of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee.

Revised Standards for Admission to Teacher Preparation Programs

In consultation with the Louisiana Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and the Louisiana State Department of Education, the staff recommended a temporary revision in the use of the PRAXIS I test as an admissions standard to teacher preparation programs (see *Appendix C*). This recommendation was a response to the cancellation of PRAXIS testing dates in Louisiana. The revised standards allow students who may be denied an opportunity to take required portions of the PRAXIS during AY 2000-2001 to be considered for admission based on their ACT or SAT test scores. The Committee approved the recommendation in June, 2000.

Online Tracking System for Academic Program/Unit Review

To make the Division's core review processes and records as open and as clear as possible to the institutions reviewed, the staff has continued to coordinate the development of an online tracking system (i.e., a database and web interface) for users to monitor staff review processes as they unfold. The database works and has been re-designed to improve usability. The plan is to make it available for general viewing by the start of fall semester, 2000.

II. Review of Existing and New Programs

Statewide Review: Low-Completer Programs and Program Collaboratives

Statewide reviews in recent years have identified “low-completer” programs at Southern University - Shreveport. These have been reevaluated, and eight of the fourteen low-completer programs have been terminated. As for the remaining six, the university was given until the end of 2003 to attain enrollment and completer goals. The university also requested that nine additional programs, which had low enrollments and no longer served the purpose for which they were intended, be terminated.

The staff also continued to monitor fourteen program collaboratives formed after the 1996 Review of Duplicated Academic Programs. Beginning in the first week of October, 1999, and extending through January, 2000, the staff conducted meetings via the compressed video network with participating campus representatives. From these meetings it was determined that six collaboratives were progressing satisfactorily. Eight others appeared to be experiencing operational/organizational difficulties. The staff requested that affected institutions take appropriate corrective steps. If problems continue, the staff will recommend that the Committee take further corrective actions.

Ongoing Review of LUMCON and the Coastal Modeling Initiative

At the request of the LUMCON Committee, the staff has initiated an external review of research, instruction, and services offered by LUMCON, including its relationship with marine and coastal science academic and research initiatives at other state universities. Currently, LUMCON and its associated universities have submitted self-review documents and the staff is engaging the services of highly-recommended consultants. Once selected, these consultants will visit LUMCON in early Fall to conduct an on-site review.

In January, 1999, the Regents awarded funding to five coastal modeling projects. In December, 1999, the staff reported on their implementation and concluded that all five projects had been implemented appropriately. Moreover, two of these have already obtained significant additional external funding:

- a. The National Buoy Center provided LSU with supplementary support to extend its WAVCIS project. Principal investigators have submitted three other proposals for over \$2 million in additional funding through various federal grant agencies.
- b. LUMCON was able to attract federal monies to afford additional coastal modeling stations needed to complete a comprehensive statewide coastal reporting system. As

these stations come online during the next year or two, the data they generate will be disseminated widely to other state scientists, giving them the information required for a wide variety of educational and research programs.

Proposed Academic Programs and Administrative Units

Academic and Student Affairs reviewed and took action on the following seventy-eight (78) staff recommendations (see *Appendix D* for more detail):

- 24 Program terminations
- 14 Follow-up reports
- 5 Revisions to existing degree programs

- 9 Letters of intent to establish new degree programs
- 13 New degree program proposals (not including the transfer of all degree programs from LTC)
- 2 Centers
- 2 New distance learning programs

- 9 Administrative changes

Of the thirteen proposed new programs considered, four were assessed by teams of external consultants who conducted on-site reviews. Five were assessed by external consultants via mail reviews.

Process Technology

In July-August, 1999, the staff recommended that the Board approve new programs in Process Technology at LTC-Sowela and LTC-River Parishes. To that point, the staff cooperated with the LTC system, the Workforce Development Commission, and the Process Technology Advisory Committee. The staff also collaborated with the Office of Facilities Planning and Control to equip the two campuses with needed instruments and equipment. The State provided \$1.5 million for FY 1999-2000. The Office of Facilities Planning and Control hired an external consulting firm to prepare design plans and formulate bid specifications. The bidding process is now underway. The necessary construction and renovation of facilities and equipment will commence shortly. The State Budget for FY 2000-2001 includes another \$1.5 million for phase two of this project. It is expected that all three of these programs will be fully outfitted by June, 2001.

IV. Educational Technology, Teacher Education, and Student Support

Banner Year for Information and Learning Technology

The Office of Information and Learning Technology made substantial progress in four main areas: the infrastructure of the statewide network, the Board of Regents Electronic Campus (BOREC), statewide faculty training, and the Digital Government Initiative.

The statewide network has been enhanced by adding an Internet 2 connection, sponsored by LSU and administered by the Office of Telecommunications Management, and the expansion of the video network to include six sites requested by the LCTC system. In the near future, our statewide video network will switch from its current transport on digital circuits to a more ubiquitous Internet transport.

The Board of Regents Electronic Campus (BOREC) has grown significantly with the guidance of the Electronic Learning Committee and the support of the Board of Regents. In the Spring 2000 semester, the BOREC grew to serve over 7000 students. Over 350 courses and two full degrees are now available electronically. Many more degree programs are being planned.

Faculty training workshops sponsored by the office have been successful. The first event was a special *Best Practices in Electronic Learning* workshop, the content of which has been archived for on-demand access by faculty. Hundreds of higher education faculty have been given the opportunity to prepare to design and deliver courseware electronically. A second event, *Learning Enterprise 101: Networked Education in the New Millennium*, featured every statewide group involved in networked education under one roof. This opportunity fostered valuable exchanges and provided impetus for new collaborative efforts.

The staff has also coordinated all education and training initiatives of the statewide Digital Government Initiative's first phase, called *LAConnections*. This represents again the leading role higher education currently plays in bringing pre- and post-secondary institutions together with state agencies to plan a revolution in education and training strategies.

For its efforts, the Office received the Computerworld-Smithsonian Laureate Award for Excellence in Information Technology. The award was one of only ninety-two given worldwide. A case study describing the Board of Regents Electronic Learning Initiative is now part of the permanent Smithsonian Research Collection in Washington, D.C.

Supporting Teacher Education: CITAL and Blue Ribbon Commission Initiatives

The staff has continued to support teacher education through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITAL), the activities of which were numerous. CITAL conducted compressed video meetings with its grant recipients, sponsored workshops for university faculty interested in seeking funding for projects in Alternate Certification, and sponsored a special forum for

campus Heads, Chief Academic Officers, and college Deans to gather feedback on the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendation for an accountability system. In conjunction with a team of external consultants, CITAL staff also reviewed institutional proposals for project planning, at-risk, and continuation awards for FY 2000-2001. The Board approved five "At-Risk" initiative projects for third-year continuation funding; five new alternate certification projects for first-year funding; five alternate certification projects for second-year continuation funding; and four new alternate certification planning projects. For the second year in a row, CITAL has also provided funding for university teacher education students to serve as tutors as part of the Louisiana Department of Education's *America Reads* program.

Division staff also devoted considerable time and effort to ensuring the effective organization, administration and operation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality. This major reform initiative made four overall recommendations and specified sixty subsequent actions to improve teacher quality, which the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education jointly endorsed in May. The four major recommendations were 1) the creation of coordinated partnerships, 2) the recruitment of teacher candidates and certified teachers, 3) the preparation of high-quality teachers, to be measured by a new teacher preparation accountability system, and 4) the creation of conditions and environments essential to the recruitment, retention and development of quality teachers.

To assist the Blue Ribbon Commission, the Division provided members for the Commission's advisory committee; it assisted the Commission's staff in conducting meetings and preparing materials for them; it funded, secured, and assisted guest speakers who made special presentations at Commission meetings; it worked closely with the Commission's staff in developing final recommendations. Shortly after the joint boards approved the Commission's recommendations, the staff worked closely with members of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee in crafting a Title II grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, which was submitted at the end of the fiscal year.

Refinements in the Academic Common Market (ACM)

Beginning in October 1999, the Staff of the Division of Academic Affairs began the review of programs available to Louisiana residents through the ACM. At that time, there were approximately 83 undergraduate degree programs and 153 graduate degree programs available to Louisiana residents. With the assistance of the Chief Academic Officers and appropriate faculty, curricular reviews were conducted on numerous programs. At the conclusion of the review, six undergraduate programs and thirty-two graduate programs were removed from the ACM. Currently, Louisiana residents have access to seventy-eight undergraduate programs and 115 graduate programs at various institutions in participating states. Collectively, Louisiana institutions of higher education offer twenty-six graduate and thirty-two undergraduate programs to other states that participate in the Academic Common Market.

Expansion of Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS)

LOUIS automated six institutions this past fiscal year: LUMCON, Our Lady of the Lake, Louisiana College, River Parishes Community College, South Louisiana Community College, and Grambling. All LOUIS online catalogs are now available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, from the internet. The LOUIS web interface has also been upgraded with faster response times and new searching capabilities.

LOUIS continued to contract for full-text resources on behalf of academic, public, and school libraries. *Books in Print*, *Ulrich's*, *Biological Abstracts 2000*, and *Toxline* are a few of the resources added to the inventory of academic libraries. Several Gale products and EBSCO's Vocational Search were licensed for the LCTC system. LOUIS negotiated licenses with ten vendors for new full-text resources for all 327 public libraries and also helped the Louisiana Department of Education to evaluate and license full-text resources for all K-12 libraries. A proxy server was implemented to give distance education students and off-campus patrons easy access to all of these resources.

Twenty-eight training classes were provided for LOUIS libraries on various topics. The Electronic Reserve System was implemented by two more institutions. LOUIS staff participated in meetings sponsored by the International Coalition of Library Consortia, five national organizations, LALINC, and ten state committees. The staff conducted Executive Overviews for administrators, committees, technical college campus directors, and many others.

LOUIS was awarded the Louisiana Library Association's Government Documents Margaret Lane Award for electronically loading all government document records for all LOUIS depository libraries on a weekly basis.

Development of Computerized Statewide Articulation Database

In 1998, the state legislature required that a statewide articulation system be computerized by Fall 2002. This project has made significant gains as a result of the joint efforts of Academic Affairs, Performance, Research & Planning, and LSU Computing Services. This year, LSU Computing Services has developed a pilot version of the articulation database that could serve every student in Louisiana higher education by making course articulation data searchable via the web. For its initial data pool, LSU has been using the General Education Course Articulation Matrix, compiled recently by the Articulation Committee from the input of state colleges and universities. A demonstration of this pilot database was given to the Articulation Committee, chaired by Dr. Larry Tremblay, on June 1. A similar demonstration was made shortly thereafter to the Council of Chief Academic Officers. The pilot project will be finished on August 31; the staff will decide whether it merits continued support.

V. Staff Changes

When Dr. Ann Britt departed to assume the presidency of Martin Community College in North Carolina and Dr. Joni Nunnery to a faculty position in the LSU Department of Information Systems and Decision Sciences, position responsibilities were carefully reexamined to ensure that the staff had persons with the necessary background, interests, and skills to handle the variety of responsibilities facing the Division in the future. Accordingly, the following staff appointments were made:

- Dr. Stephen Scott, who had served as Coordinator of CITAL since 1998, was appointed Coordinator of Program Review and Academic Projects and assumed many of the responsibilities in program review and accreditation handled by Dr. Britt
- Dr. Jeanne Burns, who had served as Coordinator of the Blue Ribbon Commission in 1999-2000, was appointed Associate Commissioner with responsibility for Teacher Education Initiatives
- Dr. Anthony Monta, a faculty member in English at LSU A&M, was appointed Coordinator of Curricular Assessment and Academic Reporting.